

a rule store for storing rules specifying grammatically allowable relationships between words of said input;

a processor for processing said input to recognize occurrence in the input of words stored in said lexical store and in the relationships specified by the rules stored in said rule store;

an output message buffer for storing data representative of a plurality of messages output to said user; and

a transaction store for storing data defining, for each of said messages, a type of allowable response;

said processor being responsive to an input from said user, to the data stored in the output message buffer and to the data stored in the transaction store to:

(a) determine whether said input is an allowable response to a most recent one of the messages represented by data stored in the output message buffer; and

(b) if said input is determined not to be an allowable response to a most recent one of the messages, determine whether said input is an allowable response to another one of the messages represented by data stored in the output message buffer.

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29. (Amended) An interactive dialogue apparatus for simulating dialogue with a user, the apparatus comprising:

an output device for outputting messages to the user;